

“For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory Forever”

Over the last six weeks, we have been studying the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray ... the Lord’s Prayer. No matter where you go in the world, you may find different worship styles and different languages spoken, but as Christians, this prayer is something that we all share in common. This prayer has shaped the Christian faith, not only as a model for prayer, but a guide for our spiritual lives.

Each week, we have been looking at a different part of the prayer and we come now to the end of the prayer, that last line: “*For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory Forever. Amen.*” The problem with this line of the prayer is that it does not appear in most of your Bibles, at least not in the main body of the text.

If you have your Bible, open it up to Matthew 6:13. In both Matthew and Luke the prayer ends in this way: “*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*” And that’s it. But there is a footnote there that says, “*In some late manuscripts, ‘for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.’*”

Now, the reason that it is a footnote, is that when the King James version was translated in 1611, they did not have access to the earliest Greek manuscripts. Since that time, there have been many earlier manuscripts of the New Testament that have been discovered. And all these earlier manuscripts end with, “*Deliver us from the evil one.*” This doxology, as it is called, of the Lord’s Prayer doesn’t begin to appear until the late 200’s. Prior to that time, there is no evidence that the Early Christians included this doxology as part of the prayer. Those of you who are Roman Catholic, you didn’t grow up learning to say the Lord’s Prayer with this doxology. You said it later in the liturgy of the Mass. But Protestants grew up learning the Lord’s Prayer in this way.

So, how did it become attached to the Lord’s Prayer? Well, very early in the Christian church, when they prayed the Lord’s Prayer in worship, they added the doxology. A *doxology* is a short word of praise that gives glory to God. And throughout the Bible you find these short, little phrases giving glory and praise to God. This week, in your Study Guide, you will read about one of these doxologies. Doxologies were common practice in Early Christian worship.

From archeological and historical research, we learn that in copying the early Greek text, this doxology was often included in the margin, because it was a fitting response to the Lord’s Prayer. And over time, it moved from the margin to the text, because it was common place to say it in worship after saying the Lord’s Prayer. And eventually, it became an accepted part of the text and has so for hundreds of years.

Though it may not have been part of the original prayer that Jesus taught to his disciples, how can we do a series of sermons on the Lord’s Prayer without including this last phrase? For us, this doxology makes a powerful claim that is a most fitting ending to the Lord’s Prayer.

So, despite its status, we are going to take a closer look at this line and learn why we believe it is an essential part of the Lord’s Prayer. And the first thing I want us to look at is that little three letter word that connects this doxology to the rest of the Lord’s Prayer ... the word “*for*”. “*For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the glory forever.*”

What does that mean? “*For*” can have many different inferences, but here it means “*because*”. So, here’s the idea. You can pray, “*Our Father, hallowed by thy name. Your kingdom come; your will be done.*” You can pray, “*Give us today the bread that we need.*” You

can pray, *“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”* You can pray, *“Lead us, not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”* You can pray all these things, *“because”* the kingdom and the power and the glory belong to God. God owns everything, so he can supply your daily needs. God alone can forgive us of our sins. We can pray these things because the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory belong to God. And this is important for us to remember.

Now, what do we mean we ascribe the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory to God? Well, I think most of us know what a kingdom is. It is a geographical region that has a monarch who is reigning over it. That is, a king or queen reigns over an area and they have power and authority over all the subjects there. So, when we talk about *the Kingdom of God*, we’re talking about the *area* or the *realm* of God. But, where is the realm of God? It’s everywhere. God reigns over everything. There is nothing that God doesn’t reign over.

And we believe that God created this world and created human beings that would receive his love and reciprocate his love, and that we would do his will in the world by loving God and loving our neighbors as ourselves. This was and is God’s will for us as his subjects.

However, God also gave us the capacity to reject his will. He gave us the ability to follow him as King or to reject him as King. And the Biblical story is about how people have rebelled against the King ... how we have resisted his leadership and his will.

But when we get to the New Testament, we find that God has a plan for dealing with the rebellion on this planet. His plan was not to send the armies of heaven to destroy the rebellion. His plan is to send *the Prince*. The Prince would come and walk on this earth, not to crush the rebellion, but rather he would seek to win over the rebels by his love. This is the Gospel story.

He came teaching us what the Kingdom of God is really like ... that it is not like what we had thought. You remember Jesus’ very first sermon reported in the Gospel of Mark was that: *“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”* This was the central message of Jesus: *“The kingdom of God has come near. The kingdom of God is at hand. It’s all around us.”* And he invites us to be a part of God’s Kingdom.

And Jesus describes God’s Kingdom in fascinating ways. He says, *“In God’s Kingdom, the first are last and the last are first.”* And this is exactly opposite of what we see in this world. He says that in God’s Kingdom, children play an important role ... they inherit the Kingdom. He says, *“The poor in spirit; the peacemakers; and the meek; and the lowly inherit the Kingdom.”* He says, *“The Kingdom of God is like a party that the King throws and he invites everyone to come, though many spurn the invitation.”* He said, *“The Kingdom of God is like a father who waits for his wayward child to come home and when he does, he runs to greet them and throws a party.”* The Kingdom of God is exemplified by Jesus, who ate with sinners, tax-collectors and prostitutes.

This is the Kingdom that we are proclaiming when we say, *“For Thine is the Kingdom.”* And it is this Kingdom that we are to spend our lives helping to bring about here on this earth.

And then, we say *“the Power”*, because we believe that God is the source of all power. When we think about the beginning of the universe, scientists tell us that the entire cosmos was originally condensed into something the size of a pinhead. And then, there was a massive explosion and all of this energy and matter began to scatter from that central point, and it continues to scatter and be flung to the farthest reaches of whatever exists out there.

The Bible tells the story this way. Before there was anything there was God and the Lord God created the heavens and the earth by simply speaking a word. All the power ... all the

matter and energy that exists comes from God. So the Apostle Paul could say to the Athenians, *"In Him we live and move and have our being."* Existence itself ... all life comes from God. So, God is *"the Power"*.

And to God belongs *"the Glory."* Now, what does glory mean? Well, it means many things. It means fame; success; praiseworthiness. It also describes a beauty; a luminescence; a majesty; a splendor; or an all inspiring thing. It is all of these things and more.

So, you remember when people in the Old Testament saw the glory of God they fell on their knees. They were awestruck and unable to speak. You remember when the Angel came to announce the birth of Jesus, the Angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds in the field and *"the glory of the Lord shown all around them"*. What happened to the Shepherds? They were terrified. This is what happens when you have a close encounter with the glory of God. Glory belongs to God, because God is glorious; magnificent; and majestic.

The glory of God was poured into human flesh in Jesus Christ, so that when John tried to describe his experience of Jesus, this what he said: *"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."* And in John's Gospel, do you remember when Jesus is glorified? It's when he hangs on the cross. Jesus displays the glory of God on the cross, because on the cross Jesus displayed the sacrificial love of God for all people who had rebelled against him. The glory of God was revealed as Jesus laid down his life for us, so that we might have life.

Today, we remember how Jesus entered the City of Jerusalem with the waiving of palm leaves and chants of *"Hosanna!"* They were ready for him to establish his Kingdom. But in the final line of this prayer, as in his life, death and resurrection, Jesus redefined what God's *"Kingdom"* and *"Power"* and *"Glory"* are to be.

So, with this understanding in mind, of what the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory of God looks like, there is an important question to ask. The word just before this phrase is *"Thine"*. So, we are saying that *God is our King ... that everything belongs to you, O God and we seek to live under your Kingship.* We are saying that *the Power belongs to you, O God, and the Glory belongs to you, not to us.*

But we have this struggle within us. From the time we were born, one of the very first words that we learned to say, after *"momma"* and *"dada"*, was *"mine"*. We are in the nursery and we're fighting with the other children: *"Mine!"* And this challenge with *"mine"* is a battle we struggle with the rest of our lives. My house ... my job ... my family ... my money ... my stuff ... my life ... my – my – my – mine. The truth is, it is hard for us to say *"Thine"*.

But this prayer is teaching us to recognize that all that we have is simply on loan to us for a time. Whatever it is, it's not really ours. Ultimately it's all God's. And something happens to us when we finally figure this out in life. When we move from having a life that is centered on what is mine and instead, can say of everything: *"It's Thine."* *Thine is the Kingdom.* Everything I have is a gift from God. It's just on loan for a time. So, what I have, I offer to you, God. *Thine is the Power.* I realize that I am powerless without you. I need you, O God. *Thine is the Glory.* It's not all about me. Help me to live my life in such a way that you will be glorified and others will think well of you.

When we finally come to this point in our lives, we will find that it's liberating to be able to say, *"Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory."* It is freeing to be able to live under the trust and the knowledge that *"Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory. It's not all about me or up to me."*

You remember, that the Early Christians were taught to pray this prayer three times a day. And when you make this your daily prayer and begin to recognize that it's not all about me, but rather, it's about "*Thine*", this becomes more than just a prayer. It becomes a way of life that frees us to live as God created us to live.

We were created for this purpose. We were created to live under *the Kingship* of God ... "*to deny ourselves, take up our Cross and follow him*", so that God's Kingdom might come on earth as it is heaven.

Life was never intended to be lived under *our power*. And over time, we discover just how powerless we really are. Many of us are no more than three months away from homelessness. The loss of a job or an illness that would prevent us from working is the only difference between us and one who is living on the streets. We discover just how powerless we really are when the doctor tells us, "*Maybe twelve months ... maybe less.*" Life was never intended to be lived under our power. We need the power of God in our lives.

And we were created to give God *glory* and to live for the Glory of God. As the Psalmist said in 115, "*Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name give glory.*" And we can do that in a variety of ways. When we come here and give praise to God in worship, that glorifies God. Every time that you do something sacrificial, because of your faith, you glorify God. Every time you resist temptation and do the right thing, instead of the wrong thing, you glorify God. Every time you do justice and love kindness, you glorify God. Every time you express love for God and love for others, you bring glory to God.

We were created for this. This is our purpose ... to live as those who recognize that "*Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory.*"

This leads us, then, to the last two words of the Lord's Prayer, which are "*Forever*" and "*Amen*".

"*Forever*" ... What's forever? I mean, nothing is forever. Beauty is not forever. Hair is not forever. Our memory is not forever, is it? The stuff that you own ... is it forever? Nothing is forever. The scientists tell us that the day is going to come when the sun will cease to shine and life will become extinct on this planet. Nothing is forever, is it? Or is it?

You see, the Bible likes the word, "*Forever*". 457 different times in the Bible, the word "*Forever*" is mentioned. And the reason why, is that the Biblical writers recognized that there is One who is forever. One who was before and will be after ... the world without end. Amen. God is forever. And the really amazing thing about God, is that God has chosen to offer us *forever*. God has said, "*I would love for you to be with me forever.*"

The Psalmist understood this. In that most beloved of Psalms, Psalm 23, we read: "*And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*" Jesus feeds the multitudes in John 6 and afterwards he says, "*If you will eat this bread, which is my body, you will live forever.*" In Revelation 22, John sees a vision of the eternal Kingdom and he says this: "*And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign with him forever and ever.*"

It has been my privilege to share this good news with many over the years. When I sit beside the bed of one who is facing their final days here on this earth, what comfort there is hearing that word, "*Forever*". I think of having prayer with Weylain McDonald a couple of weeks ago on the day before he died. Holding hands with him and his mother, Judy, we prayed, knowing that there was really nothing more that the doctors could do. There was no real hope there. The only hope was in the God whose Kingdom and Power and Glory are forever. This is our hope in life.

When we finally get to the end of this prayer, we come to that little word, “Amen”. In both the Hebrew and the Greek, “Amen” means the same thing. It means, “So be it.”

When we get to the end of this prayer and we have said, “God, you are my father and I am your child. And you are all around me, as near to me as the air that I breathe and as far as the cosmos. And Hallowed be your name.” When you say, “May your Kingdom come and your Will be done on this earth, so that there is no more hatred; racism; violence; injustice; no more wars; or pain.” When you pray, “God supply my needs, giving me just enough and not too much. And feed my soul, so that I hunger no more.” When you live in God’s grace and pray, “God forgive my sins and help me to forgive other people.” When you ask him to: “Lead me, not in the way of temptation, but in your paths of righteousness, O God, and to deliver me from the evil one.” When you finally say, “Thine is the Kingdom and it all belongs to you. And yours is the Power and the Glory, Forever.” What else can you say, but “So be it. Amen.”

So, to close today, I am going to invite you to say the Lord’s Prayer with me. During this series, we have not said the Lord’s Prayer together here in worship. Each week, we have offered it through different means, showing it on video, having it sung, even danced to. But the reason why we didn’t say it together over these six weeks is that we wanted you to hunger to pray it together. We wanted you to miss it, so that you would hunger to pray it together. But also, that you wouldn’t pray it, until you really understood it. For, this prayer is not meant to be just words that we say from memory, but rather, this prayer is meant to shape your very life.

With that in mind, let us pray these words that Jesus taught us to pray, slowly and carefully, remembering all that we have come to learn about this prayer:

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day, our daily bread.
Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*